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ABSTRACT

To understand more fully what factors lead to successful collaboration at the local level, case studies of five Common Good local linkage teams were conducted. Since 1990, 47 teams have been formed under the auspices of Common Good, a statewide project to facilitate development of local interagency linkage teams throughout Ohio. Local teams focused on improving services to at-risk youth and adults through development of collaborative interagency linkages. Five teams, representing diversity of locations and methods of operation, were selected: Montgomery, Portage, Scioto, Washington, and Wayne counties. Case studies were organized around developing factors, functioning, and ongoing sustainability of Common Good teams at the local level. Interviews of team members, personal observations by project staff, and published documents such as newsletter articles, media releases, brochures, and meeting agendas were used as references. Teams shared the following common elements that contributed to successful interagency collaboration: regular communication, customer-centered focus, shared leadership, structure and focus, esprit de corps, relationship to one-stop system, and support from the Common Good State Team. The only common challenge was lack of time. Recommendations were for the State Team's continuing leadership; study of the project's relationship to the one-stop system; a meeting for local teams to share activities; and the State Team's support of continuing study of local collaborative linkage activities in Ohio. (YLB)

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For the Common Good: Local Linkage Team Case Studies

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Foreword

For the Common Good is a state-wide project with the goal of facilitating the development of local interagency linkage teams throughout Ohio. These local teams focus on improving services to at-risk youth and adults through the development of collaborative interagency linkages. Since 1990, a total of 47 local linkage teams have been formed under the project's auspices. Information about the activities of these teams has been collected through three follow-up surveys conducted in 1992, 1994, and 1997. The amount and kind of information that can be gathered through surveys is limited, however.

To more fully understand what factors lead to successful collaboration at the local level, case studies of five Common Good local linkage teams were conducted. This publication contains the results of the case studies. It was developed to provide information that can be used in sustaining existing teams as well as in the formation of additional local interagency teams. The project staff and the For the Common Good State Team members express their appreciation to the Common Good teams located in the following counties: Montgomery, Portage, Scioto, Washington, and Wayne. The study could not have been conducted without their cooperation.

Prior to its publication, the report was reviewed by Jeffrey Gove, Educational Consultant, Adult Basic and Literacy Education, Ohio Department of Education and For the Common Good State Team facilitator; and Kristen Cox, Assistant Director, Career-Technical and Adult Education Division, Ohio Department of Education. The following local team coordinators reviewed the case study for their team: Christine Alexander, Montgomery County; Harry Carpenter, Portage County; Sandra Lawyer, Scioto County; Dewayne Poling, Washington County; and Robert Smedley, Wayne County.

Susan Imel, Common Good project director, and Cynthia Zengler, coordinated the study. They were assisted by Gina Zwerling.

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Introduction

For the Common Good is a statewide project with the goal of facilitating the formation of local interagency linkage teams throughout Ohio. These local teams focus on improving services to at-risk youth and adults through the development of collaborative interagency linkages. Since 1990, 47 local linkage teams have been formed under the project's auspices. The project was initiated as a result of the Family Support Act of 1988 that required states to make educational services available to participants through the Job Opportunities and Basic Skills Training Program. For the Common Good has now expanded its focus to all workforce development efforts and operates under the direction of a team composed of state-level staff.

In the summer of 1989, Ohio formed a team at the state level to facilitate the development of linkages between educators and human services staff. Originally composed of representatives from the Ohio Department of Education and the Ohio Department of Human Services, the State Team has been expanded to include representation from the Ohio Bureau of Employment Services, the Ohio Board of Regents, the Ohio Department of Alcohol and Drug Addiction Services (ODADAS), the Ohio Department of Development, the Ohio Department of Natural Resources, the Ohio State University Extension, Ohio One-Stop Program, and Common Good Local Linkage Teams.

To encourage and facilitate local linkages of programs and services for workforce

development customers, the State Team planned and implemented five workshops to train local interagency teams. A total of 45 local linkage teams from throughout Ohio were trained during these 2-day workshops. The workshops were designed to provide sufficient planning time for teams to draft an action plan for guiding their activities during the following 12 months. Technical assistance in the form of state-level staff expertise was also available to the teams during and after the training. Two additional teams were formed through assistance from the State Team separate from the training workshops.

Teams attending the initial workshops were required to have members representing the following areas: adult basic education, vocational education, Job Training Partnership Act, and human services. Since 1993, teams have also been required to have representatives from employment services and postsecondary education and strongly encouraged to include members from their local ODADAS boards and community action agencies. Beyond these requirements, each team filled its roster according to local community needs and preexisting linkages.

To sustain and encourage the local linkage teams formed under its leadership, the State Team also planned and implemented five follow-up meetings for local linkage teams. During these meetings, teams reviewed and revised their action plans, networked with other teams, and shared successes and challenges. Additional activities held for teams included two forums related to federal legislation, including a workshop on implementing the Workforce Investment Act, and a day-long event at Camp Mary Orton

in which teams participated in leadership and challenge activities designed to strengthen collaboration.

Since the inception of the For the Common Good project in 1990, much has changed. Established as a means of addressing a specific legislative initiative, For the Common Good has also responded to the national trend of collaborative linkages as a strategy for implementing systemic change. In Ohio, the reality of Ohio Welfare reform and state initiatives like School-to-Work, Ohio Families and Children First, one-stop systems, and others, reinforce collaboration as a process to facilitate quality services being available to Ohio families and communities. Most of the one-stop systems funded in Ohio have Common Good roots; that is, a Common Good local linkage team formed the nucleus for the development of the collaboration required for one-stop systems.

Like many other "good ideas," successful local interagency collaboration is not easily achieved. It takes time, energy, leadership, and commitment on the part of the agencies involved. Despite these challenges, approximately 30 of the original 47 Common Good Local Linkage Teams (LLTs) have remained active and many have made remarkable progress in developing integrated services with a customer-centered focus. Three follow-up surveys (Imel 1992; 1994; 1997) of the LLTs have provided some information about what factors have contributed to their success. The amount and kind of information that can be collected through follow-up surveys is limited, however. Many lessons about interagency collaboration at the local level can be learned from a more in-

depth study of the LLTs. To more fully understand what factors lead to successful collaboration at the local level case studies of five Common Good local linkage teams were conducted. The next section describes the procedures that were used in conducting the case studies. It is followed by a section that contains the five case studies. Following the presentation of the five cases, common elements that contribute to successful interagency collaboration are discussed. The report concludes with a series of recommendations.

Study Procedures

The experiences with the project during the past ten years have demonstrated that local linkage teams "can't be turned out like widgets" (Schorr 1997, p. 28). Variations in local community contexts, personalities of individuals constituting the team, and other factors mean that each team has had to "reinvent parts of the wheel" (ibid.). The study is designed to identify the essence of successful teams that can be adapted by others seeking to establish or strengthen interagency linkages at the local level.

In conjunction with the State Team, the following five teams were selected for inclusion in the study:

- Montgomery County
- Portage County
- Scioto County
- Washington County
- Wayne County

These five teams represented diversity in terms of location and methods of operation. The original Portage County Team, for example, was formed during the initial workshop held in April 1990, but after achieving its original goal, disbanded, and the current team was formed at the May 1995 workshop. Scioto County also represents a team that has had two lives; the original team became inactive, but a new team reactivated in the summer of 1997 and attended the December 1997 workshop. Montgomery County is one of only two urban teams among LLTs. Both the Wayne County and Washington County teams were selected on the basis of the type of innovative activities in which they have engaged.

During the summer of 1999, the five teams were visited for the purpose of studying the factors that enable the selected teams to continue to be effective in their efforts of interagency collaborations. The teams visited and the dates visited are listed in Figure 1. The visits were conducted by Susan Imel, Cynthia Zengler, and Gina Zwerling.

Figure 1: List of sites, dates and events observed.

Team	Date of Visit	Event
Montgomery County	7/21	Team Meeting
Portage County	7/13	Team Meeting
Scioto County	6/16	Team Meeting
	8/19	Be a Voice Forum
Washington County	7/9	Team Interviews
Wayne County	7/8	WINGS Program
	7/29	Team Meeting

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Although the goal of the For the Common Good Local Linkage Team Case Studies project is to identify factors that contribute to successful collaboration in creating interagency linkages, the case studies also examine how local Common Good teams function and the extent to which policies and decisions are effectively implemented at the local levels. They also highlight features that appear to facilitate systemic change. To ensure the quality of data, data were enhanced by using multiple sources of information and carefully organizing and documenting the information collected.

The case studies were organized around developing factors, functioning, and ongoing sustainability of Common Good teams at the local level. The framework of topics for the local level visits was developed from the following major questions based on the *Guide for Developing the Local Interagency Linkage Teams* (Imel 1995), a document published for the purpose of assisting local communities in developing effective collaborative interagency linkage teams.

1. What specific roles are played by agencies and individuals in planning and implementing the For the Common Good LLTs?
2. How successful are local teams in achieving participation in the For the Common Good activities?
3. What is the pace of progress in implementing the For the Common Good LLTs?
4. How have agency staffs been prepared for planning and implementing the For the Common Good LLTs?
5. What progress is being made in improving services?
6. What barriers affect the progress of For the Common Good LLTS?
7. What features or implementation approaches contribute to the potential for positive outcomes?

Cases

The case studies that follow describe the selected teams more fully. In addition to the results of the interviews of the team members and personal observations by the project staff, published documents such as newsletter articles, media releases, brochures, and meeting agendas were used as references, when available. The three follow-up surveys (Imel 1992; 1994; 1997) were also consulted.

Montgomery County

The Montgomery County Common Team attended the April 1990 Common Good Institute. At that time, the team members identified the following objectives in their action plan:

- To increase staff awareness and identification of community services to enhance referral process.
- To increase community/consumer awareness and appropriate use of services.
- To develop a common definition of job readiness.
- To explore the possibility of a centralized assessment center.
- To establish linkage and/or contracts with service providers.
- To establish procedures for effective and efficient reporting.

As the team evolved, members were added. In May 1993, at a Common Good project follow-up meeting, the team revised its name to be Montgomery County/Dayton City At-Risk Linkage Team and formulated the following objectives:

- To increase staff awareness and identification of community services to enhance referral process.
- To effectively utilize funds available for inner-city families through the cooperative planning of DHS, Dayton Public Schools, JVS, DMHA, and JTPA.
- To provide for child care in unique and occasional situations specifically during GED testing.

- To maintain/monitor attendance and progress procedures to meet needs of each component.
- To develop a plan for ongoing contact of key players.

The current chair of the team is Christine Alexander, Project Director of the Family Life/Even Start office at the Dayton Public Schools. The project staff met with six of the current teams members for about an hour on July 7, 1999 at the Job Center One-Stop facility in Dayton. Over the last year, the team has met infrequenly, explained the team members, because they are struggling "to find a niche" in the community since the initiation of the Dayton Job Center and the one-stop system. When they do meet, the meetings provide a forum for the members of the team to know what is happening in the agencies and the local community. Outside of team meetings, the Montgomery Common Good team has conducted only one major activity. This activity was a cross-agency training for the staff of the agencies involved with the Common Good Local Linkage Team to provide information about the services offered. The team has considered other activities such as a director's breakfast to discuss areas that need to be addressed, short coffee sessions to inform staff about current happenings or changes, and a Job Fair similar to Cincinnati's CASH workshop. These activities have not happened primarily because of the current changes within the state structure and the development of the Dayton Job Center. However, the team has reservations about the need for such activities being sponsored by the Common Good local team.

When asked what the value would be in continuing the Common Good team, the members felt that the Common Good meetings provide a means for developing strong communication links. "Turfism" can be a problem especially as state agencies redefine

their functions. However, the personal relationships created through the Common Good meetings have assisted in the facilitation of work within and between agencies. For example, when letters are required for grant applications, it is easier to request letters from individuals with whom preexisting relationships exist. The members also agreed this bond of collaboration does not just happen and the Common Good provides a means for developing and sustaining the linkages.

The team members questioned themselves as to the continuation of the meetings. Although most of the agencies represented on the Common Good team are colocated at the Dayton Job Center, not all of the Common Good team members are housed there. When Job Center meetings are held, Common Good team members are not necessarily attending. The team members agreed that Common Good team meetings are necessary and requested the chair to arrange a meeting in the near future. The team also agreed that they would like to provide more information about the successes of customers possibly through some type of marketing emphasizing even stronger communication and linkages as the primary function of a Common Good team.

When asked about the relationship of the local team with the state Common Good team, the members present overwhelming agreed that workshops, conferences, and other communications sponsored by the State Team provided information and opportunities for the team to plan for the future. In addition, the team felt that the state-sponsored communications such as the newsletter provided a needed support structure for the local teams. The team would like the State Team to continue to sponsor events throughout the year.

Portage County

Portage County was among the first group of Common Good Local Linkage Teams and attended the first Common Good Institute in April 1990. The goal for the original team was to improve transportation for Portage County adults. The team achieved this goal by working with its local representative to the Ohio House of Representatives to pass a law allowing adults over age 18 to ride on public school buses. After achieving this goal, the team disbanded.

In May 1995, the current Portage Common Good Linkage team was formed. The team is committed to improving services and delivering performance to the community through the development of collaborative interagency linkages. It meets monthly under the leadership of its chair, Harry Carpenter, manager of the OBES One-Stop Employment and Training Center.

One of the objectives of the team is to improve linkages and increase the involvement of other agencies, thereby expanding and enhancing the effectiveness of the Common Good team to provide better services to Portage County residents. The team achieves this objective by sponsoring breakfast meetings held monthly on the last Friday during the school year. Speakers at the meetings represent a variety of community agencies and organizations and provide valuable information about their programs to those present. Another objective of the current team was for all agency staff to become better informed about the work of all the agencies represented on the team. This objective was achieved through interagency orientation sessions held at Maplewood Career Center. A series of 3-hour meetings was held in which staff members from

agencies represented on the team provided brief overviews about their work. The Portage Linkage Team has also sponsored job fairs in the past and is currently thinking of reviving this activity. Each Monday, the team also circulates by fax a list of full- and part-time jobs available in Portage and Geauga Counties. Included is information about location, experience required, whether or not the job offers benefits, and the hourly wage. The team began this service to its members in order to facilitate the placement of clients.

The project team met with the Portage County team on July 13, 1999 at the regular monthly team meeting. In conversation with the team members, the team discussed its struggle with its role in relationship to the Portage-Geauga One-Stop. Prior to the implementation of a one-stop in Portage and Geauga Counties, the team members thought that the Portage Common Good Linkage Team might be replaced by the one-stop. Now, however, they feel that a role for the Common Good Linkage Team will still exist after the one-stop is fully implemented. The team members believe that the Common Good linkage team has facilitated the communication about implementation of the one-stop as well as the many changes taking place at the state level. The exchange of information will continue to be an integral part in facilitating communication.

Scioto County

The current One-Stop for the Common Good Local Linkage team is the second team in Scioto County. The first team disbanded and the new team was formed in 1997. The current chair is Sandra Lawyer of Shawnee State University. The second team was initiated in June 1997 by Ruby Grant, Director of the Scioto County Department of Human Services. The team held its first meeting with 24 agencies on the mailing list and

has already grown to include more than 55 agencies, civic organizations, churches, and businesses. After several months, the Scioto County Common Good team evolved into the One-Stop for the Common Good of Scioto County through the recognition that the purpose of service integration corresponds with the Ohio one-stop concept.

One-Stop for the Common Good of Scioto County has begun work on issues as far-reaching as a community clothes closet, reliable transportation, and accessible dental care for all in Scioto County. Through its "Be A Voice" forum, the Scioto County team brought together for the first time in one place 16 public service agencies with community residents to promote dialogue to enhance service delivery. All of these projects are relevant to the team's mission.

After the regular monthly meeting on June 16, 1999, the project staff discussed the value of the Common Good team with core team members. The team members offered several reasons for the success of the current team, including the members listen and take their time to offer alternative solutions for problems that arise during the meetings; the members feel they are respected and can speak openly; and when assistance is requested, the requests are carefully considered and not refused outright. The attitude of the local team is that the Common Good "never says no but says how." Although the group may say "not right now," the members will return to the issue at a later date. This firm commitment to the community helps build accountability, consistency, and communication between and among agencies.

When asked about the challenges and barriers that they have found in developing a Common Good team, the members kept reverting back to expressing the pluses of the

organization. The only real barrier to the team efforts has been time. Each of the team members participates on the Common Good team in addition to their regular responsibilities at their home agencies. Another challenge, not a barrier as they see it, is the need to continually look for resources and work around or over the challenges placed in their way. The team members said their attitude was to "hear, meet, respond." They do not let problems sit but rather work on solutions. In addition, the team members "hold the ideas of the organization [One-Stop for the Common Good of Scioto County] above turf issues." This was evident by the cooperation of the county commissioner and a team representative from the mayor's office during the discussions at the meeting. The local team in Scioto County has "tried to work the principles of Common Good at the local level and tried not to be a group in name only." Team members suggested the team also works because team objectives are specific to the community needs and the team has local leaders involved.

The local team felt the State Team played two important roles. First, the State Team provided guidance by providing institutes and newsletters. The workshops and other meetings sponsored by the State Team have provided opportunities for the teams to work together in developing a plan of action. Second, the state provides the professional development on creating linkages and has been a "gateway to the action" at the local level.

Washington County

Washington County Partners formed in 1993, drawing membership from previous networking groups such as Jobnet and monthly agency lunches. Each year a different

Partners' member assumes the role of chair. The current chair is Dewayne Poling, Adult Program Director for the Washington County Career Center. Members are responsible for carrying out Partners' initiatives within their own organization.

In recent years, the Washington County Partners organization has shifted from primarily a case management approach to a broader community approach. Formerly, Partners worked to identify and assist families that would benefit from the joint efforts of its members. However, Partners' members soon realized that by applying their collective energies to the broader community, they could have greater impact.

Activities that focus on the community vary widely. In an innovative approach to linking with legislators, Washington County Partners sponsors semiannual legislative forums. These are typically attended by the Washington County state senator and representatives, as well as, an aide from the U.S. senator's office. Another very successful new program developed by the Washington County Partners is "JUMP Ahead in the Workplace," a job readiness workshop. As part of its ongoing commitment to cross-training staff and informing the public, Partners holds an annual training seminar.

The project staff interviewed members of Washington County Partners on July 9, 1999. During the interviews, communication was defined as the key to a successful partnership. According to team members, they "talk to each other and are willing to work with each other." The Partners "always put everything out on the table, and work for the benefit of the clients." Communication between team members does not stop with official meetings; members work together between meetings by referring clients to each other and sharing resources. The members said they "do not let Partners lie dormant." One team

member said that "knowledge of each others' services helps to expand services offered to our clients and avoids turfism." In addition, the collaboration has helped "the agencies to be more efficient and reduces the frustration of the clients and the staff of the partners."

The members of the Partners would like the State Team to continue to offer the workshops and communications. These activities have provided support to "help the groups get back together and to share information." The workshops provide a means "to gain insights into the other teams' activities."

Wayne County

The Wayne County Common Good got its start May of 1995 when a group of individuals who shared an interest in improving services and the working relationships around local public employment assistance programs/services attended a statewide "For the Common Good Institute" designed to facilitate the development of local interagency collaboration. During the course of this event, the Wayne County group discovered that, although all participants had discrete programs and circumstances, they were all experiencing similar pressures from public, state, and federal funding sources. By the end of the conference, the Wayne County group had taken on a team identity and had developed an action plan. The plan included the following objectives:

- To create a linkage organization of public employment assistance and ancillary support programs.
- To build a public and private employment service linkage through planning, coordination, and collaboration.
- To take the lead at the local level by creating a competitive agenda in which all levels of government could participate as equals.
- To reduce barriers to employment for shared and chronically unemployed or underemployed clients.

The principal factor that has been involved in the transformation from a group of individuals working separately to a team is a regular meeting schedule. From May of 1995 until the present, the team has never missed convening its monthly meeting. During many of the months, the team members also participated in numerous work committee meetings. Further, the team has accepted an operating philosophy that the agenda be a working agenda, full of projects to complete on agreed time lines. The team has learned that it derives a sense of future from pursuing an ever-developing list of objectives. This action extends the team from its present to its future on a continuing basis.

One of the results from this team is a creation of a common, customer information sharing form and agreement for its use by the members. The team's design for an automated customer information entry and sharing system was later adopted by the five county one-stop proposal. The team also has developed a motivational workshop known as WINGS. Conducted the first week of each month, the workshop participants are job-seeking customers referred by the various Common Good member agencies as well as other community agencies. The team also conducts a series of cross-systems training on member organizations, grant development and innovative service projects.

By creating a private nonprofit corporation, For the Common Good, separate from the linkage, the team has also secured grants and other resources to conduct linked services. Status as a nonprofit corporation allows the team to be the fiscal agent for grants, do business on behalf of the linkage team, and pursue an account development strategy. The corporation is used for marketing both the program and the linkages to accounts interested in welfare reform and for other fruitful linkage activities.

The project staff attended the monthly team meeting on July 19, 1999 and observed one-half day of the WINGS program on July 8, 1999. The current chair of the team is Robert Smedley, an associate director at the Mental Health and Recovery Board - Wayne/Holmes County. During the discussion with team members, the members said that they "don't have many answers to the big questions," but they have learned "that collaboration and a 'knuckle down, buckle down, do it, do it, do it' attitude makes a difference." In addition, the relationships that have developed among the team members "help clients because we can direct the clients to the right person." The team members also mentioned that the team is influenced by the people that make up the team, "if the team had had someone who was negative on the team then the team would not have continued."

The workshop, sponsored by the State Team, helped in the initial planning and ongoing support. The State Team has been a mentor for the local groups. The State Team models collaborative efforts and assists the local team by advocating at the state levels.

Common Elements

Each of the teams studied is unique. Factors such as community context, personalities of team members, importance placed on interagency collaboration, and so forth contribute to this uniqueness. Yet, the teams share some common elements that have contributed to their success in developing and sustaining successful interagency linkages. Not all teams studied share every element described below. Teams have used

"intelligence, experience, and wisdom to sort out . . . [what needs to be done locally to craft the Common Good model] to fit local needs and strengths" (Schorr 1997, p. 60). Based on the case study interview results and project staff observations, the elements discussed in the following sections contribute to successful interagency collaboration for local Common Good teams.

Regular Communication

All teams studied expressed the role of communication as an important element in contributing to successful collaboration. The desire to improve communication between and among agencies was also one of the reasons given for forming and continuing Common Good teams. Although teams maintain communication through regular meetings, most team members communicate between meetings as well. According to one member of the Washington County Team, "a day does not go by that there is not interaction between partners in the Common Good." Regular communication is seen as the vehicle for discussing issues, avoiding and/or eliminating potential problems, and maintaining a customer focus. One member of the Montgomery County team expressed the "real need [for resuming regular team meetings] for the use of communication." Although members of this team felt that the one-stop has taken over many of the functions first planned for the Common Good, the Common Good team members are not the ones participating in the Dayton Job Center meetings and, thus, feel a communication void.

Customer-Centered Focus

The teams visited perceived their primary purpose to be that of working jointly to

provide better service for their common customers. Again and again, this customer-centered focus emerged during discussions with teams. The activities in which teams are engaging affirm the reality of this focus. The characteristic of customer centeredness may account for the lack of turf issues observed among the members of the teams studied. Because these teams have made a conscious effort to focus on their common customers, they seem to be able to work "for the common good," rather than for the recognition of any one particular agency or team member.

Shared Leadership

Although all teams were established because an individual took the initiative to organize a group to attend the workshop sponsored by the Common Good State Team, most of the teams studied seem to have evolved into a model of shared leadership. All of the five teams have had more than one chair, and, in two teams, Scioto County and Washington County, the position of chair rotates on a regular basis. Beyond this formal leadership, however, members of most teams assume leadership responsibility for various team activities. In many respects, the teams could be characterized as being like a jazz ensemble with leaders emerging based on team members' talents or interest in leading a particular activity.

Structure and Focus

Closely related to the characteristic of shared leadership are the characteristics of structure and focus possessed by four of the teams studied. Not only do these teams meet monthly, but they are also involved in planning and implementing projects that are part of an overall action plan. The teams that are the most successful at achieving true

collaboration develop activities to solve problems that members have identified jointly or that have come to their attention through other means. The "Be a Voice" forum sponsored by the Scioto County team, for example, has resulted in customers identifying some areas of need that are now being addressed by the team. The focus on solving real problems through activities or projects seems to provide teams with the motivation to continue. They can see that their collaborative efforts are making a real difference for their common customers and their communities.

Esprit de Corp

The importance of the human factor is often over looked in discussing collaboration. Most teams observed demonstrated a common commitment to and enthusiasm for the work of their Common Good team, and members seemed to genuinely like one another and enjoy being together. Although the importance of interpersonal relationships and team spirit were not identified directly by any team, it was evident in many of the things they said about their work as well as in how they approach their activities. Phrases such as "each person believes that their contribution is an integral part of the process," " [you] felt that you would be listened to," and "honest and professional organization," are evidence of the importance of the human factor in teams.

Relationship to One-Stop System

Although all teams studied were formed prior to the implementation of the one-stop system in Ohio, each has questioned its relationship to its area one-stop center. Teams have asked, for example, how their activities overlap or duplicate one-stop services. The teams studied have had varying responses to the questions about their

relationship to the one-stop system. The Montgomery County Team, for example, initially felt that many functions of the Common Good team were taken over by the one-stop housed at the Dayton Job Center, and the team has been inactive during the past year. As described earlier, however, Montgomery County Common Good team members are reconsidering this decision and have asked the chair to resume regular meetings. Two of the most active teams studied seem to believe their role as a Common Good team transcends the role of the one-stop system. On these teams, the agencies are broader than those on the one-stop centers in their areas. Even when agencies participate in both Common Good teams and the one-stop center, Common Good team members are not likely to represent their agency in one-stop decision making. The fact that Common Good teams do not operate under any legislative mandate has allowed them the autonomy to develop in unique ways to address the needs of customers in their communities.

Support from Common Good State Team

All teams expressed the importance of the leadership and support of the Common Good State Team in their ability to develop and sustain interagency collaboration at the local level. Most frequently mentioned was the time during the workshops to develop an action plan. According to the local teams, the planning time helps to get teams to focus. Follow-up meetings were important because of the opportunity to review and revise plans as well as to identify and share team accomplishments. Networking with other teams, including discussing successful activities, provided teams information for expanding their own activities. According to one team, the Common Good State Team models the type

of collaboration expected at the local level and provides leadership. Members on the State Team come from various agencies and engage in successful interagency collaboration.

Lack of Time

The only common challenge mentioned by teams was lack of time. Yet, the most active teams have managed to overcome this deterrent because of the value they place on the team's work. According to one team, "time is a problem because members need to address responsibilities of their jobs; however, employers have found that participation in Common Good activities have benefitted the community and agencies."

Conclusion

The opportunity to study five Common Good Local Linkage Teams in depth provides additional knowledge about what factors contribute to successful interagency collaboration at the local level. The following common elements were identified as important factors in the Common Good teams studied:

- **Regular Communication.** Regular and frequent communication sets the stage for successful collaboration. Members of more than one team mentioned that it is not unusual to be in daily contact with one or more Common Good team members.
- **Customer-centered Focus.** Working jointly to provide better service for common customers is perceived to be the primary purpose of Common Good teams.
- **Shared Leadership.** In terms of leadership, most teams are more like a jazz ensemble than an orchestra. Leadership emerges based on individual talent and interest.
- **Structure and Focus.** A plan provides structure and focus for team activities. For most teams studied, projects and activities are an important part of the plan.
- **Esprit de Corp.** Respect for one another and commitment to the

Common Good team is evident.

- **Relationship to One-Stop System.** Teams expressed varying relationships to the one-stop center in their areas. The most successful teams perceive their mission as transcending the one-stop system. Others are struggling to develop a niche for Common Good in light of one-stop implementation.
- **Support from the Common Good State Team.** Initial and continuing support from the State Team is important to all teams studied. Most mentioned the gift of uninterrupted time during the workshops that allowed them to develop action plans.
- **Lack of Time.** The most frequently mentioned challenge to the work as a Common Good team is lack of time.

Although the five teams studied possess these characteristics to varying degrees (and all teams did not possess every characteristic listed), these factors appear to be common elements that may be the essence of Ohio's successful Common Good Local Linkage Teams (LLTs). According to Schorr (1997), when successful projects are replicated, "they combine the replication of the essence of a successful intervention with the adaptation of many of its components to a new setting or new population" (p. 60). Therefore, identifying these elements is an important part of continuing to replicate the Common Good project at the local level. If existing and new Common Good LLTs are going "to build on previous experience and improve it," it is important to understand what elements must be present for a team to succeed as well as how teams have adapted the model to their local setting.

Recommendations

The following recommendations, based on the findings from the study, are designed to provide guidance for the next stage of the For the Common Good project:

- **The Common Good State Team should continue to provide leadership for the development and support of interagency linkage teams at the local level.** Every team studied mentioned the importance of the State

Team in terms of its initial development and continuation. This observation is supported by Schorr's (1997) finding that successful replications have "had the continuous backing of an intermediary organization that offered expertise, outside support, legitimation, and clout to help sustain the . . . intervention" (p. 61). Part of this support should be serving as a model to local linkage teams in terms of how to integrate with the emerging one-stop system. Information from the case studies should be used by the Common Good State Team in structuring future activities.

- **The relationship of the Common Good project to the one-stop system should continue to be studied.** Based on the results of this study, how Common Good teams perceive their relationship to the one-stop center in their area appears to affect their functioning. The relationship between the Common Good and the one-stop system bears further investigation since neither Common Good nor the one-stop system has been fully implemented throughout the state. Many of the "lessons learned" by local Common Good teams may be helpful to one-stop centers as they enter into their collaborative partnerships. In addition, Common Good teams need to consider how they integrate services in order to be part of a comprehensive one-stop system.

- **A meeting for the purpose of "learning from one another" should be held for local Common Good teams.** Common Good teams are engaged in many innovative activities at the local level. These activities should be more widely shared by providing an opportunity for teams to meet and talk face-to-face to discuss the activities and how they could be adapted in other communities.

- **The Common Good State Team should support the continuing study of local collaborative linkage activities in Ohio.** The opportunity to study five Common Good local lingkage teams has only "uncovered the tip of the iceberg" on how teams have managed their collaborative activities. For example, no Common Good team was included in this study that has chosen to give up its identity because of its affiliation with a one-stop center. Examination of additional Common Good teams as well as other successful local collaborations would result in additional information for use in fostering Common Good teams at the local level.

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For more information on the For the Common Good Project, check the project website at the following URL–http://literacy.kent.edu/CommonGood/.